MARVEL

005

GILLEN
WALKER
DEERING
FABELA

STAR WARS

DOCTOR APHRA

APHRA

Book I, Part V

It is a period of opportunity. In a galaxy oppressed by the cruelty of Imperial forces, there is little hope for the future. But for those operating on the fringes, there is potential for profit.

Rogue archaeologist Aphra is back to retrieving rare artifacts with a pair of homicidal droids and Wookiee bounty hunter Black Krrsantan. Aphra's plans are suspended, however, when her estranged father gets her to join his search for the mysterious Ordu Aspectu.

After very narrowly escaping Imperial forces on Yavin 4, Aphra and her father reach the long-lost citadel of the Ordu Aspectu. Upon arriving, they immediately know that they have found the ancient Jedi order. What they don't know is that they've been followed....

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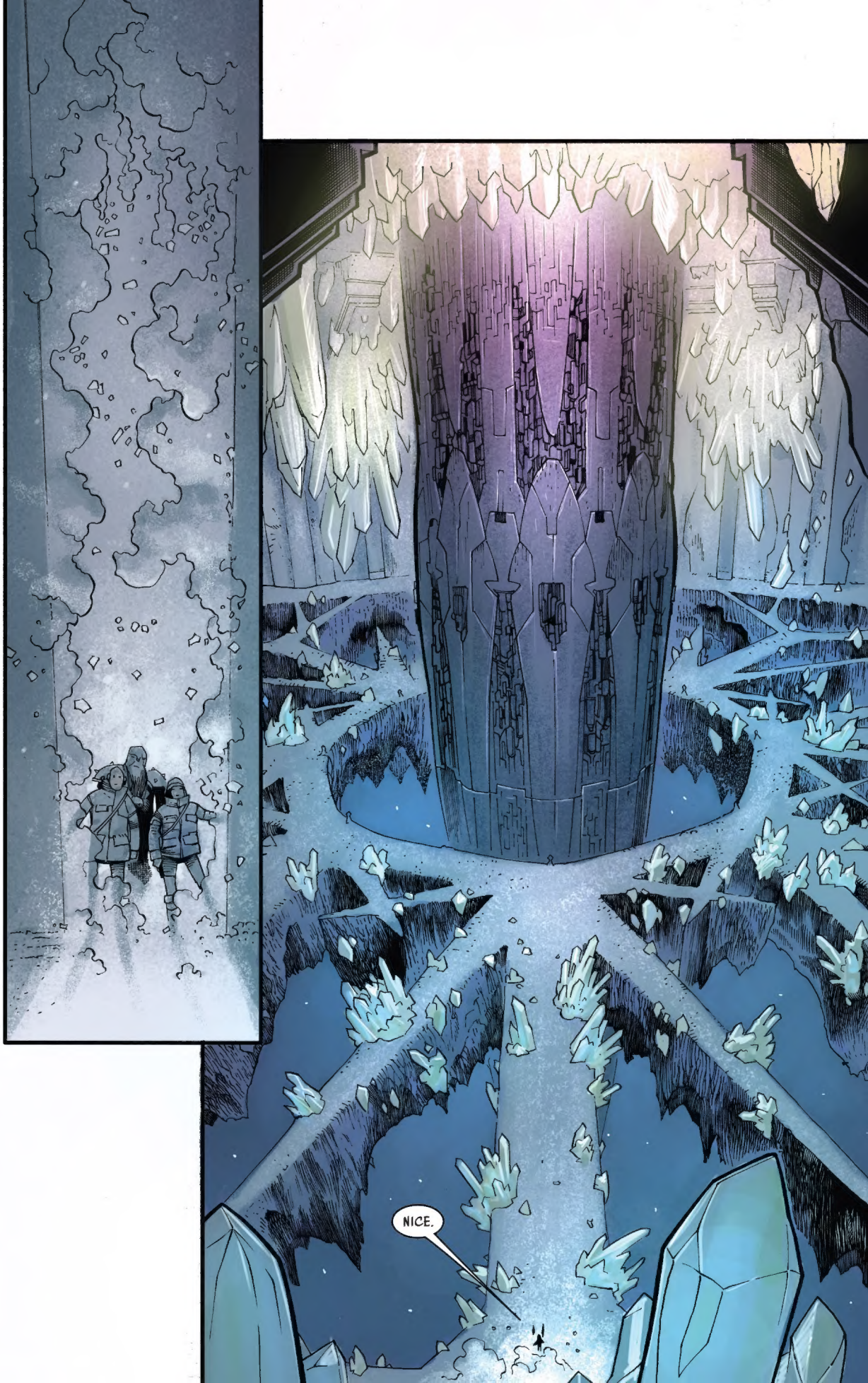
The Citadel Of Rur.
WHAT IS IT, CAPTAIN?
ABSOLUTION, WITH ANY LUCK.
I'M SORRY, CAPTAIN?
DON'T BE. I SHOULD BE. A POETICAL FLOURISH.
AN UNFORGIVABLE EXTRAVAGANCE IN AN IMPERIAL OFFICER.
ADVANCE. SECURE THE SPACE STATION. FIRE AT WILL.

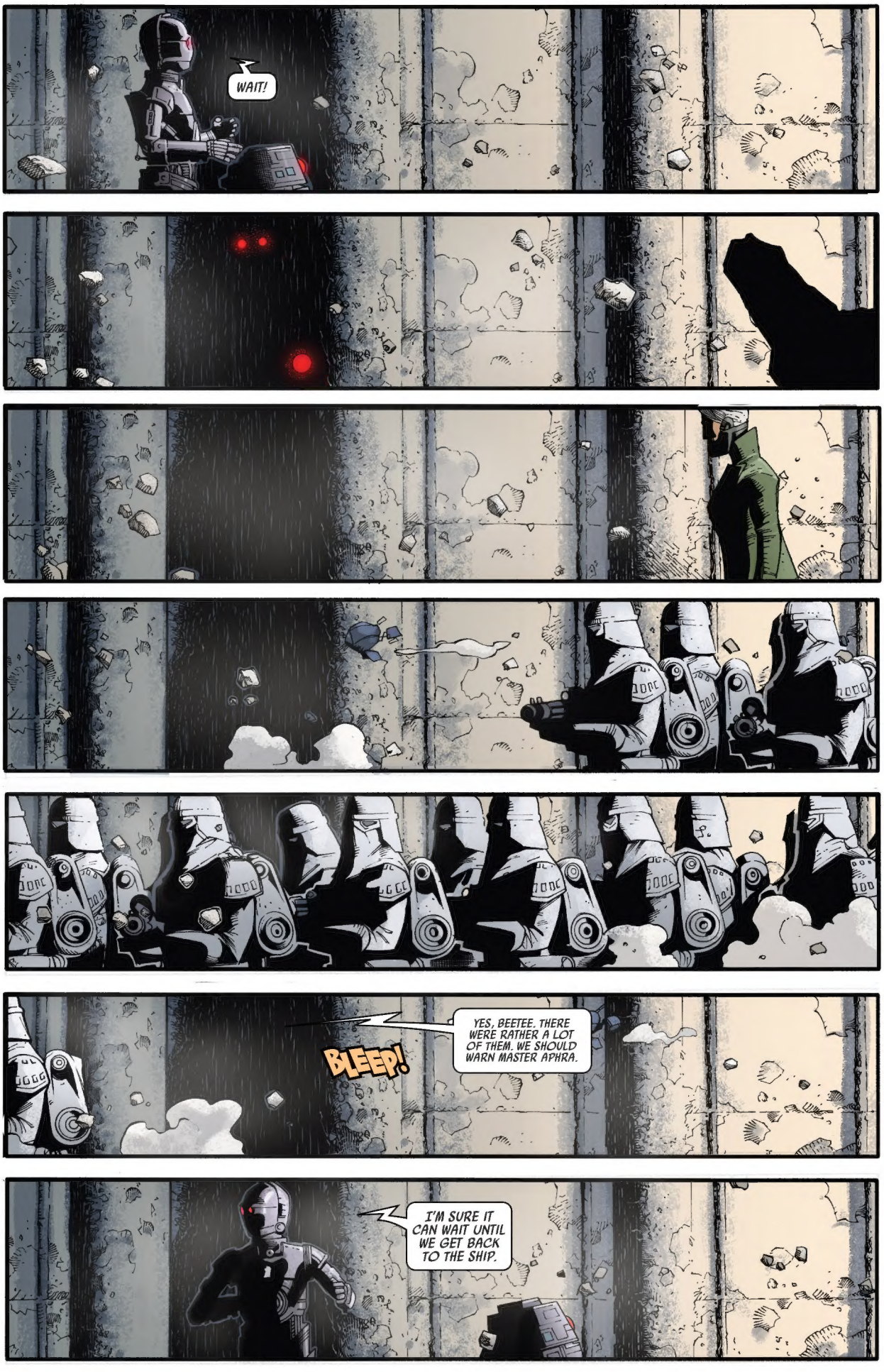
SO, DAD. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
GOOD FEELING/BAD FEELING?
DON'T BE SARCASTIC. THIS IS AN ABOMINATION.
JEDI WERE TYPICALLY CREMATED. THESE DIED IN PAIN...AND THAT THEY'RE HERE SHOWS THERE WERE NO JEDI TO PERFORM THE TRADITIONAL RITES.
UNLESS THE ORDU ASPECTU HAD A DIFFERENT TRADITION, OF COURSE...
AH...NO, THESE AREN'T ORDU. NONE OF THE ICONOGRAPHY.
THESE ARE ORTHODOX JEDI...
WHAT A HORRIBLE DEATH FOR THOSE WHO LIVED ONLY FOR PEACE.
WE...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

THERE'S ALWAYS COLLECTORS LOOKING FOR SECONDHAND LIGHTSABERS.
YOU'RE... ROBBING CORPSES!
WHAT DO YOU THINK I ACTUALLY DO, DAD? ARCHAEOLOGY IS JUST GRAVE ROBBING WITH FANCY PAPERWORK.
AND I'VE GOT DEBTS TO PAY.
GGGRRRRRHHHH!
YES, I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN. IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE MONEY.
WHAT DOES HE MEAN?
I PROMISED TO FIND THE PEOPLE WHO TRAINED HIM TO BE A GLADIATOR.
HE DOESN'T OBJECT TO THE LIFESTYLE. HE OBJECTS TO ANYONE CONTROLLING HIM. EVER.
AH. WELL, NOW I CAN SEE WHY YOU TWO GET ALONG.
HEY-- BARBED PASSIVE AGGRESSION IS MY MOVE.
LET'S GO.

OKAY... BIG SEALED BLAST DOOR. AND THE TEXT... WAIT, DON'T TELL ME.
ETERNAL RUR?
IMMORTAL RUR.
LET'S FIND THE GENERATOR.
TA-DA!
BLEEP!
YES, BEETEE. I'M SURE OUR HUMAN MASTERS HAVE NOTICED THE CRYSTAL FRAGMENTS ON THE FLOOR.
THEY WOULDN'T BE OUR MASTERS IF THEY WERE NOT OUR BETTERS IN EVERY SINGLE WAY.

OKAY--HOW DO WE GET THIS BAD BOY RUNNING?
KLiK KLiK KLiK
OKAY. THESE ARE GOING TO BE USEFUL. HOW MANY DO WE HAVE?
IF I'D COLLECTED THEM ON YAVIN 4, I'D HAVE A FINE SELECTION.
ALAS, NOW, WE HAVE... THIS ONE.
KLAK
OKAY-- I MAY BE ABLE TO MIMIC ITS FUNCTIONALITY.
TRIP! BEETEE! THERE'S A CRYSTAL MODULATOR ON THE SHIP. GO GET IT.
CERTAINLY, MASTER.
APHRA!
IMMORTAL RUR.
PERHAPS YOU CAN ACCESS THE LOGS FROM HERE?
NO. CORE IS STILL DOWN. POWER, BUT NOTHING MORE...
LET'S SEE IF I CAN GET THIS OPEN...
BiP BiP BiP


NICE.


WAIT!
BLEEP!
YES, BEETEE. THERE WERE RATHER A LOT OF THEM. WE SHOULD WARN MASTER APHRA.
I'M SURE IT CAN WAIT UNTIL WE GET BACK TO THE SHIP.

OPENING DIRECTLY INTO SPACE...
THIS CAN'T BE SAFE.

THE ORDU TRIED TO MAKE THEIR FOLLOWERS UNDERSTAND THEIR SMALLNESS COMPARED TO THE MAJESTY OF SPACE. AND...
LOOK! THESE ARE CIVILIANS. LAYPEOPLE LIVED AMONG THE ORDU! THIS PROVES THE THEORY OF LUPIN TUTAX! THIS IS AMAZING INFORMATION.
AND THEY'VE ALL DIED IN PAIN. THIS IS ALSO AMAZING INFORMATION.

DIRECT VENTS INTO OPEN SPACE...AND WE CAN STILL BREATHE. LIFE SUPPORT MUST BE ON ITS OWN SYSTEM.
THAT CERTAINLY ALIGNS WITH VARIOUS ORDU THEORIES. IT'LL BE PART OF THE CORE COMPUTER...

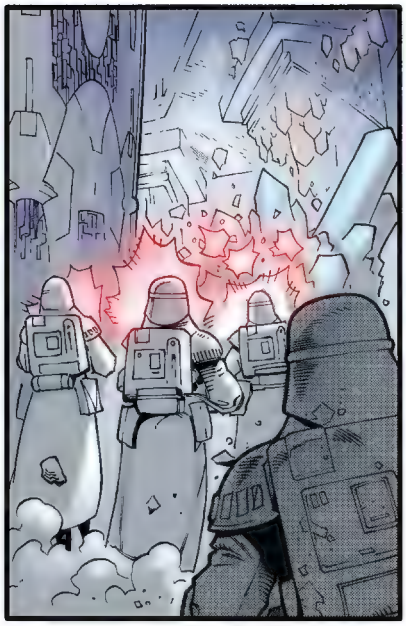
OKAY--WHERE IS THE COMPUTER CORE? IF WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED, THAT'S WHERE WE NEED TO GO.
IN THE CENTRAL SPIRE...
GRRRR.

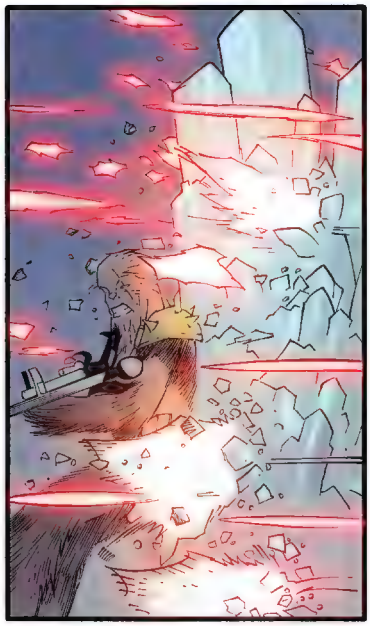
BWAMCH

ADVANCE!
HELL.
MASTER APHRA!
SOME IMPERIALS ARE HEADING YOUR WAY. I FOUND A COUPLE ABOARD THE SHIP. THEY'RE GONE NOW.
SHALL WE PROTECT YOUR VESSEL? AND POSSIBLY MOP UP?
GEE, THANKS FOR THE WARNING, GUYS. PREP THE SHIP.
KRRSANTAN-- SLOW THEM DOWN AND THEN PULL BACK.
WE'LL TRY AND FIND A SAFE PLACE FOR YOU TO PICK US UP.
HGGGRGRGGRGRH!
AND REACH THE CORE, OF COURSE.
WE'LL SEE.

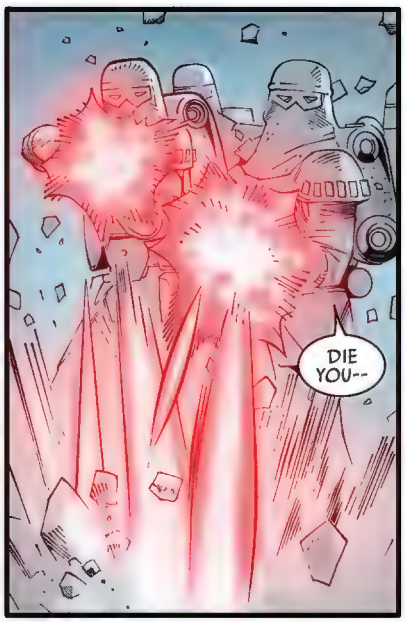
IT'LL INCLUDE EVERYTHING--THEIR GREAT WORK, THEIR RECORDS, EVERYTHING...
AND THE ARC ANGEL COULD PICK US UP HERE. OKAY...HOW DO WE GET ACROSS--
AH.
KLIK
OOH.

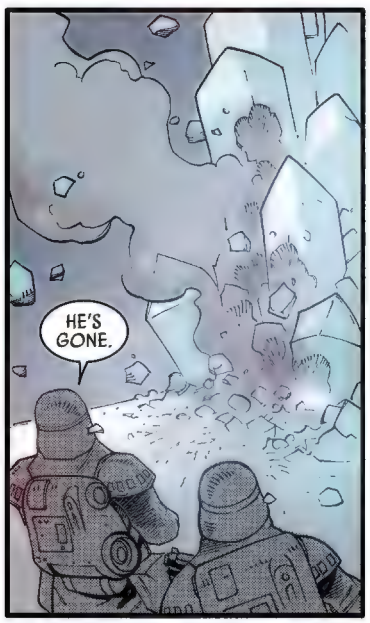
SQUAD BETA, ON FLANKING. SQUAD ALPHA, COVERING FIRE. LET'S SHOW THE BEAST WE'RE NOT IN THE JUNGLE ANYMORE...

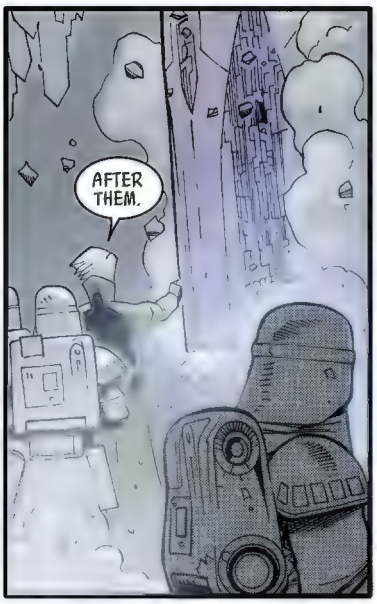


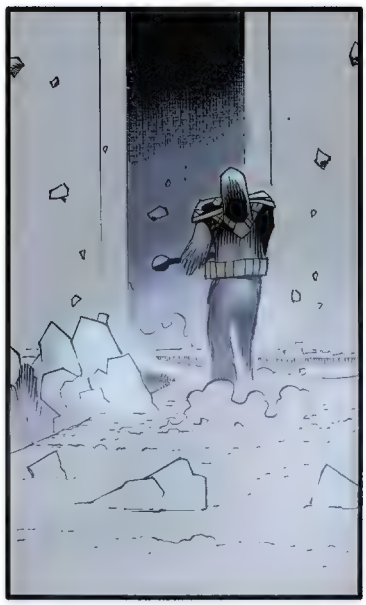


GRRRR.


DIE YOU--


HE'S GONE.


AFTER THEM.



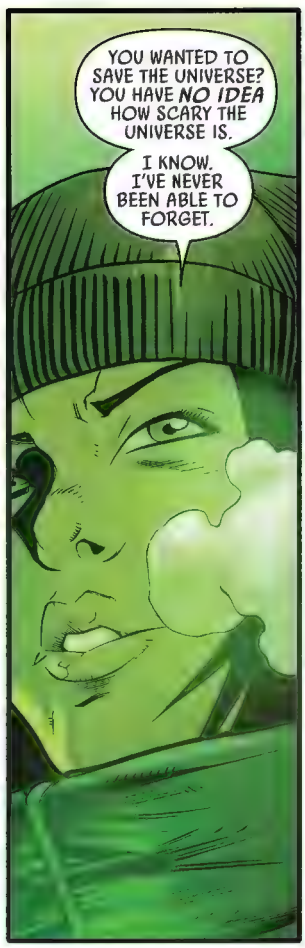
A FORCE BRIDGE. ELEGANT, BEAUTIFUL, AND SURPRISINGLY EASY TO TRAVERSE! WE LEARN SO MUCH WITH EVERY STEP!
THE COMPUTER CORE SHOULD BE THIS WAY. FOLLOW M--
HELL.
MASTER APHRA...BLACK KRRSANTAN IS HERE.
HE TOLD ME TO PASS YOU A MESSAGE.
PASS HIM A MESSAGE.
IF HE WAS DATING A BANTHA, SHE'D STILL BE THE LOOKER!
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
HE IS LEAVING. IF YOU LIVE THROUGH THIS, YOU STILL OWE HIM. BYE-EEE!
I TRANSLATE MEANING, NOT HIS IDIOM, OF COURSE.

GET READY TO RUN.
THE BRIDGE! IT'S--
SLAMMMMMM

I...THE ELEVATOR TO THE CORE. I...
RELAX.
BY THE CONSOLE...IT'S HIM! IMMORTAL RUR!
GOT TO ADMIT, I'VE SEEN MORE IMMORTAL.

IT'S MISSING A CRYSTAL.
WE CAN'T REBOOT THE COMPUTER.
SO, DAD, YOU'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT HAPPENED HERE.
AND WE'RE GOING TO SIT HERE, NOT KNOWING ANYTHING UNTIL THE IMPERIALS CATCH UP...

I MEAN, YOU HAVE TO BE USED TO THAT. ALL THESE YEARS BELIEVING IN THE ORDU ASPECTU WITH LITTLE OR NO EVIDENCE.
I WAS TRYING TO BRING LIGHT BACK TO THE UNIVERSE.


YOU WANTED TO SAVE THE UNIVERSE? YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW SCARY THE UNIVERSE IS.
I KNOW. I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO FORGET.

I KNEW. THAT'S WHY I CHASED THE ORDU, CHELLI.

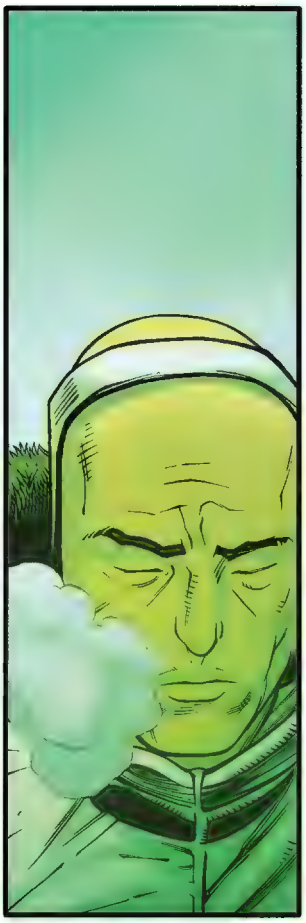
WHEN THE JEDI DIED, WE ALL SAW WHAT CAME NEXT...AND WE HAD TO TRY AND FIND A WAY OUT. I ALWAYS LOVED THE ORDU...BUT IT WAS ONLY WHEN THE GALAXY BURNED THAT I ACTIVELY CHASED THEM.
I WAS ONE MAN. I WAS NO WARRIOR. WHAT DIFFERENCE COULD I MAKE?

I COULD BRING BACK THE ORDU.
THEN WE COULD HAVE A GALAXY SAFE FOR MY DAUGHTER TO GROW UP IN.

LONA...YOUR MOTHER...DIDN'T AGREE. SHE THOUGHT WE SHOULD LIVE WITHOUT FEAR AND DAMN THE CONSEQUENCES.
MAKE A HOME OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE AND LIVE.

IT WASN'T ABOUT ME. IT WAS NEVER ABOUT ME.
DID SHE EVER SAY SHE HATED ME?

NO. SHE JUST THOUGHT YOU WERE WRONG.

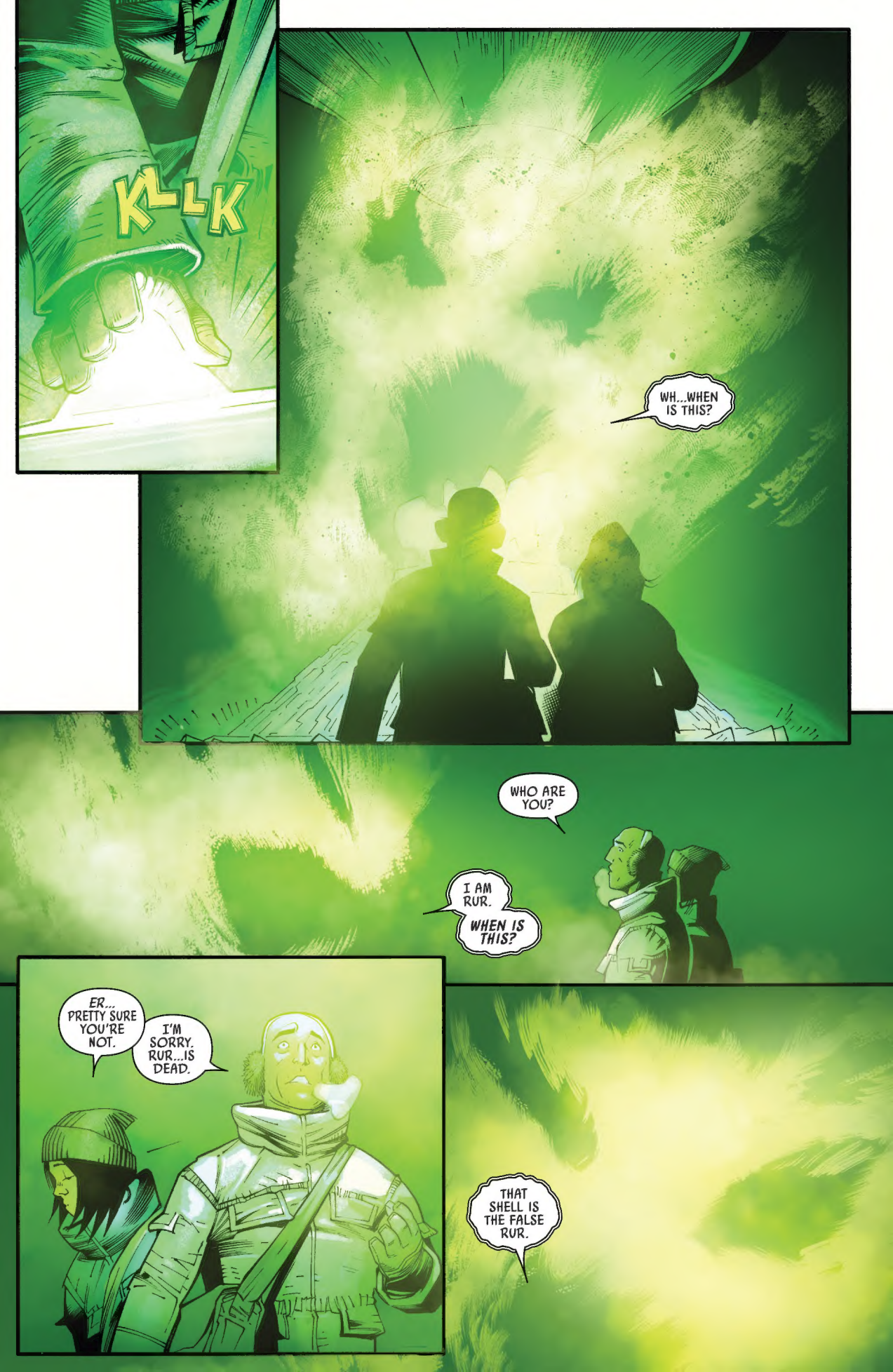


THAT'S LONA. SHE LIVED HER LIFE WITHOUT COMPROMISE. NEITHER OF US COULD DEAL WITH THE IDEA WE WERE BOTH WRONG ABOUT WHAT WAS BEST FOR YOU.
I'M SORRY YOU WERE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE. WE WERE SO SCARED OF BEING BAD PARENTS THAT WE WERE THE WORST PARENTS.

I'M STILL DOING IT NOW.
I FORCED YOU TO COME... HERE.

THE SAVA YOU STOLE THE SYMBIOTES FROM DIED LAST MONTH.
HE HAD NO DESIRE FOR HIS POSTERITY TO BE UNDERMINED BY JUST PUBLISHING EVERYTHING YOU'D DONE...BUT HE SENT ME THE DETAILS. HE KNEW YOU HATED ME AND PRESUMED THE REVERSE WAS TRUE.
I LEAKED SOME OF IT.
IF YOU GET OUT OF HERE, IT'S EASY TO GET YOUR DOCTORATE BACK.
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO--
NO, DON'T TELL ME YET.
DON'T BE NAIVE.
IF YOU REMOVE THE GUN FROM MY HEAD, I MAY BE TEMPTED TO STAB YOU.
YOU WOULDN'T.
YOU DON'T KNOW ME AT ALL, DAD.
SO, DO YOU WANT TO TURN THIS THING ON AND FIND OUT WHAT THE HELL THE ORDU WERE UP TO?

WH-WHAT...
RUR THE NOT-SO-IMMORTAL HAD ONE.
I PALMED IT WHEN I SEARCHED HIM.
SO WHAT WAS THAT?
WE DON'T TALK ENOUGH.
SEEMED A GOOD TIME, WITH THE ABOUT-TO-DIE AND ALL.
BUT DAD... LISTEN.
THIS REBOOTS THE CORE COMPUTER. THAT'S THE ONLY WAY WE'RE GOING TO GET TO THE RECORDS.
BUT I'M PRETTY SURE RUR DIED TURNING THE SYSTEM OFF.
ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO KNOW THIS BADLY?


KLLK
WH...WHEN IS THIS?
WHO ARE YOU?
I AM RUR.
WHEN IS THIS?
ER... PRETTY SURE YOU'RE NOT.
I'M SORRY. RUR...IS DEAD.
THAT SHELL IS THE FALSE RUR.

I AM RUR.
ETERNAL RUR.
YOU KNOW, I GET THE FEELING "I TOLD YOU SO" IS GOING TO BE AN AWFUL LOT LESS SATISFYING THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE.

DOCTOR APHRA

NEXT ISSUE:

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away is a lot easier to get to than you think – and we want to hear from you! Write us at StarWars@Marvel.com if you want to make it onto a future letters page. Don't forget to mark the letter "OK TO PRINT."